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Thesis

THE ETHICAL CONTENT OF HINDUISM

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The Ethical Content Of Hinduism:

The literature comprising what is generally known as the sacred writings of the Hindus is so vast in extent, having accumulated during more than three thousand years of speculation, that it is beyond the scope of a thesis to make an exhaustive study of it all. Rather an attempt has been made to select the more important sections, which are representative of the various periods of Hindu thought and life, in order to discover whether they contain a message that may be termed ethical in its teachings.

It is essential for us to realize, as we enter upon our study, that it would be unfair for us to use as our standard of moral values, only those that are commonly accepted in the western world. That is, in the West, we are apt to value the worth of an action solely by its objective results. "By its fruits" we judge. We are prone to forget that the widow's mite, while only a mite, may be highly significant in the scale of fundamental human values. In our study of any Indian religion, particularly that of the ancients, we must remember that the social and political organization was markedly different from that in the West. Their conception of community solidarity, of common needs, interests and responsibilities was slightly, if at all, developed. As a result we see but little emphasis placed upon the objective worth of moral action. Thus if we limit ourselves to this angle in our search for ethical values, we shall be disappointed. On the other hand one cannot but be impressed by the emphais which they placed upon the subjective value of moral action. We must therefore be prepared to use, as one of our standards, the subjective value of an activity which, in the opinion of the worshipper, involved some personal sacrifice which

he believed himself to be making. We must take into our consideration the degree of self-denial, renunciation and, what might be termed, the relinquishment of worldly pleasures, that was involved in his action, even though it may have been of no value to his fellow-man.

It will be necessary, first, to consider briefly the history of this ancient Nation and then the chief systems of thought which, through the centuries, developed as these religiously inclined peoples attempted to understand and appreciate the eternal facts of life.

Long before our authentic history began, an aboriginal people, now known as Kholarians, were inhabiting the plains of India. Tribes from the North and East found their way across the passes of the Himalayas, and settling in the fertile valleys, became the ancestors of the people whom we now call Dravidians. They being much more aggressive and with a higher type of life than the people whom they found, pushed the Kholarians back into the hills or on farther to the South.

Centuries later another, an even greater, invasion began, this time approaching from the northwest. The Aryans were now on the move. History tells us that they divided, a part finding their way down through the Khyber Pass, while their brothers, our ancestors, wandered on toward the West, ultimately finding their way into Europe. This was probably about 4,000 B.C. Being a strong virile type and finding their new surroundings in northern India very much to their liking, they in turn, appropriating the most desirable and convenient areas, pushed the Dravidians to the southward. Some of the latter however remained as slaves and their descendants are known today as <u>outcastes</u>. probably as Sudras or 4th caste

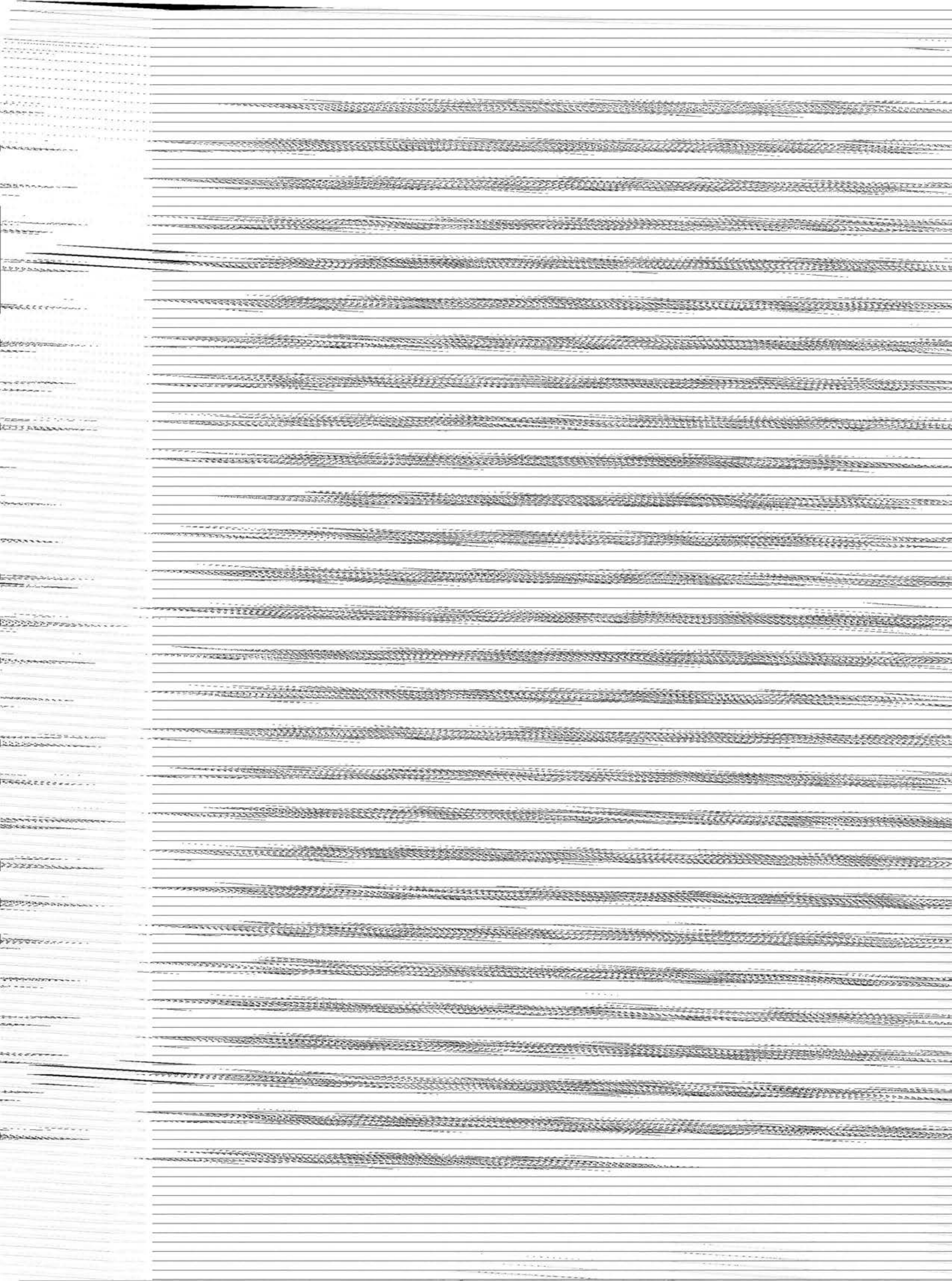
Are not the "outcastes" descendants of the hill country tribes (of Kolarian ancestry)?

Regarding the religion of those early days we know but little. We do know that at a very early date a certain system of worship began to take shape. Just how much of its essence was brought in with the Aryans and what part was absorbed from the people with whom they came in contact, after arriving, it is difficult to determine.

Throughout its history, India has placed great stress on its religious life. Nowhere else is the daily routine of the people so impregnated with religious conviction and practices. Practically every activity of the day has a religious significance. Getting up in the morning, bathing, preparing and eating food, working in the fields, all have their central interest in the religious meanings attached to them. It is safe to say that in no other land has the character of the people been so profoundly affected by the religious history through which it has passed. Their religious practices have varied all the way from a cruel, crude superstition, on up through to an ethical philosophy of life and religion, that is remarkably beautiful in its concepts. This does not mean that through the years the ethical note has been steadily more pronounced. On the contrary we shall see that following times of high moral attainment, there have very often been relapses into a baseness most discouraging.

We shall consider some of the chief systems of thought which, through the centuries, have developed in response to this religious impulse as it has attempted to find expression.

<u>The Rig Veda</u>: This is the first of the many vedas, the actual dates of its compilation being much in question. Most authorities are agreed that it was compiled between 2,000 and 1,000 B.C. Undoubtedly the religious concepts which it represents go back much further into pre-historic times.



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its effect upon their lives, by investigating the nature of a few of the more prominent gods whom they worshipped. In all of them we shall find that the physical characteristics are very much more prominent than the moral.

The god who stood in first place amongst all the gods was Indra. He seems to have been the universal favorite. Nearly one fourth of all the hymns are addressed to him. He is primarily the great god of the thunder storm. He slew the mighty dragon Vrittra, who was responsible for keeping the rain locked up in the clouds.

I will proclaim the mighty deeds of Indra,
The first that he performed, the lightning wielder.
He slew the serpent, then discharged the waters,
And cleft the caverns of the lofty mountains.

Indra slew Vrittra and one worse than Vrittra,
Vyamsa, with lightning, his resistless weapon:
Like trunks of trees, with axes hewn in pieces,
The serpent clinging to the earth lay prostrate.

Enclosed by demons, guarded by a serpent,
The waters, stood like cows by Pani captured.
The waters' orifice that was obstructed,
When Vrittra he had smitten, Indra opened.

Indra is king of all that's fixed and moving,
Of tamed and horned beasts, the thunder-wielder.
He truly rules, as king of busy mortals;
Them he encompasses as spokes the felly.
R.V. 1,32: 1,5,11,15,

One fully to appreciate the significance of the releasing of the waters and the response the theory found in the hearts of the people, must recall the longing with which the people of the hot, parched areas look forward to the breaking of the monsoon. During certain periods the rain does not fall for months. Often the grain is burning in the fields for lack of moisture, the cattle are starving, as also, in some instances, are the people. The only thing that will revive the crops, cool the torrid atmosphere and prevent death, is rain. As the monsoon approaches, the clouds boil up every afternoon, the lightning flashes and the thunder roars; and then to the dismay of

the people who are longingly watching and hoping, the clouds often settle back again and for days the rain may not fall. So the simple people saw in this but one thing: that manifestation of an angry demon. Vrittra, because of his wickedness and hatred of all things, kept the waters shut up in captivity. How could he be overcome? Who could deliver the people from his wrath? None but a friendly god. So Indra, out of love for his people, waged a great battle in which he hurled his mighty thunder bolt, his most powerful weapon, and ultimately succedded in smiting the dragon to death. Then the rains came and all life was revived. It seems however, although Vrittra was slain, the battle was not completely won, for it is necessary for Indra to go on fighting forever.

Probably because of the popularity which Indra achieved in this important feat he became the great warrior god and they called upon him to lead the Aryan forces into battle.

Without whose aid men conquer not in battle,
Whom fighting ever they invoke for succor,
Who shows himself a match for every foeman,
Who moves what is unmoved: he, men, is Indra.

Who with his arrow slays the unexpecting,
Unnumbered crew of gravely guilty sinners;
Who yields not to the boatsing foe in boldness,
Who slays the demons: he, O men, is Indra.
R.V.11,12:9,10

Thus because of Indra's allegiance the enemies were smitten and great battles won. Because of his mighty deeds he came to be looked upon as the creator and sustainer of the universe.

Who made the widespread earth when quaking steadfast,
Who set at rest the agitated mountains,
Who measured out air's middle space more widely,
Who gave the sky support: he, men, is Indra.

In whose control are horses and all chariots,
In whose control are villages and cattle;
He who has generated sun and morning,
Who leads the waters; he, men, is Indra.

Both Heaven and Earth, themselves, bow down before him:
Before his might the very mountains tremble,
Who, famed as Soma-drinker, armed with lightning,
Is wielder of the bolt; he, men, is Indra.

As he grew in popularity and influence and as the people magnified his mighty deeds, he came to be called the preserver of all life and only through him was existence possible. Later, in the Atharva Veda, Indra came to be looked upon as the power in life that inspired one to have unselfish thoughts and to feel kindly, even toward one's enemies. He answered prayers, rewarded goodness, justice and virtue and was able to forgive the penitent.

Thou are our guardian, advocate,and friend,
A brother, father, mother, all combined.
Most fatherly of fathers, we are thine,
And thou art ours. Oh! let thy pitying soul
Turn to us in compassion when we praise thee,
And slay us not for one sin or many.
Deliver us today, tomorrow, every day.
Ar. V.1V,16.

But in the Rig Veda we find no such advanced conception as this in the hymns to Indra. Ethical qualities as such have little or no place in the hymns to this most popular god. The praises that are sung of him, deal almost exclusively with his strength and skill in battle. It cannot be claimed for him that he was noted as a moral ruler.

The next god in popularity, judging by the number of hymns addressed to him, was Agni, the god of fire. Whenever the fire was kindled in the house, or elsewhere, Agni was present. He thus became the guest of every household and was given power to drive away demons, deliver from all peril, and bestow prosperity upon all those who worshipped him.

Whoso with good steeds and fine gold, O Agni,
Comes nigh to thee on a car laden with treasure,
His friend art thou, yea, thou are his protector,
Whose joy is to entertain thee duly.
R.V. 1V,4,10.

During this period the sacrificial fire had come to play an increasingly important part in the religious ceremony. So Agni came to be looked upon as the god who summoned the various gods to be present at the ceremony and it was but natural that he should come to be looked upon as particularly important and powerful amongst the various deities.

> Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as by ancient seers:
> He shall bring hitherward the gods.
>
> May Agni, sapient-minded Priest, truthful, most gloriously great,
> The God, come hither with the gods.
> R.V. 1.2,5.

Thus Agni came to be looked upon as the Priest God. The first hymn of the Rig was so addressed to him.

> I laud, Agni: the chosen Priest, God, Minister of sacrifice,
> The Hotar, lavishest of wealth.
> R.V.1.1

It was claimed for Agni that he maintained order in the universe for under his control the various parts functioned. As we shall find this same function much more fully developed in connection with Varuna, we shall wait to deal with it then. This custom of assigning to different gods identical functions and powers is confusing. Each god seems to have been supreme at various times. We shall see that the inevitable result was the development of a pantheistic outlook. All the gods came to be looked upon as modes or manifestations of one central, supreme being. "Agni is all the Gods". As they pondered upon this baffling question it is not strange that their religious practices came to be less and less of an active type and more speculative; of a resignation to the impossibility of solving the riddle of the Universe.

It was also claimed for Agni that he was able to burn away guilt, sin and restore the sinner to favor with the gods.

> Deliver, mighty lord, thy worshippers,
> Purge us from taint of sin, and when we die,
> Deal mercifully with us on the pyre,
> Burning our bodies with their load of guilt,

But bearing our eternal part on high
To luminous abodes and realms of bliss,
For ever there to dwell with righteous men.

Pardon, we pray, this sin of ours, O Agni--
the path which we have trodden, widely straying.
Dear friend and father, caring for the pious,
who speedest nigh and who inspirest mortals.
R.V. 1.31.16.

This power to forgive sins was a function ascribed to several of the gods during this period. It would seem to indicate that there was developing in the minds of the people a definite conception of moral guilt. Sin was recognized as existing. But God was a moral Being and He expected men to live moral lives. Thus there was a definite responsibility placed upon men to lead lives that would conform to His standard. Here then we have, at least, the germ of a definite ethical conception; an all-powerful God who expected his followers to lead moral lives, who was able to forgive and cleanse his followers from their sins and who was so supremely interested in their welfare that he was available at all times to assist those who called upon him to free them from the evil in their lives.

The next god whom we shall consider exerted a powerful influence during this early period. From our standpoint he is the most important of all for in him, Varuna, we find the highest ethical development of the times. He was by far the worthiest and noblest god of the Rig. He grew to be the universal monarch, "King of gods and men." He it was who made heaven and earth and kept them apart by laws which he established.

Wise, verily, are creatures through his greatness
who stayed even spacious heaven and earth asunder;
Who urged the high and mighty sky to action,
the Star of old, and spread the earth before him.
R.V.V11; 86, 1.

The sun, stars and wind obey his every command:

Whither by day depart the constellations that shine at
night, set high in heaven above us?
Varuna's holy laws remain unweakened and through the night
the moon moves on in splendor.
R.V. 1: 24,10.

Not only does he control the forces of nature but he is responsible for the moral order of the universe as well. He sits upon a throne high in the heavens, but is deeply concerned in the affairs of the world, particularly those relating to the happiness of men. He sends his emissarries forth daily to mingle with men and to return with reports of their actions. He is so great and capable that he keeps an accurate report of each individual.

The beauteous eye of Varuna and Mitra,
The Sun, now rises up, his light extending,
Who with his gaze looks down upon all creatures,
He ever notes the burning zeal of mortals.

This pious priest, heard far away, here utters,
His hymn for you, O Varuna and Mitra:
Do ye, O Sages, treat his prayers with favour,
And may his autumns be replete with wisdom.

From wide-spread earth, O Varuna and Mitra,
Ye bounteous gods, and from the lofty heaven
Ye have disposed your wandering spies in dwellings
And plants, ye who with watchful eye protect us.

Ye both are wise, O mighty ones, for you two,
These lauds are sung without deceit or magic.
Avenging spies pursue men's falsehoods closely:
There are no secrets that ye cannot fathom.

For you, O gods, this service has been rendered
At sacrifices, Varuna and Mitra.
Across all dangers do ye safely take us.
Ye gods protect us evermore with blessings.
R.V. V11,61. 1,2,3,5,7.

In the following well-known hymn we find the same idea expressed more clearly.

The mighty Varuna, who rules above, looks down
Upon these worlds, his kingdom, as if close at hand.
When men imagine they do ought by stealth, he knows it.
No one, can stand, or walk, or softly glide along,
Or hide in dark recess, or lurk in secret cells,
But Varuna detects him, and his movement spies.
Two persons may devise some plot, together sitting,
And think themselves alone; but he, the king, is there--
A third--and sees it all. His messengers descend
Countless from his abode, for ever traversing
This world and scanning with a thousand eyes its inmates.
Whate'er exists within this earth, and all within the sky,
Yea, all that is beyond, Varuna perceives.
The winkings of men's eyes are numbered all by him:
He wields the universe as gamesters handle dice.
A.V. 1V. 16.

But beyond this, he was full of compassion for all humanity. In men he finds his source of greatest comfort and joy. He urges all who are conscience stricken, because of evil in their lives, to turn to him and being just, holy and of a forgiving spirit, he will freely forgive them their sins and will assist those who become his followers in achieving righteousness. Because of his being looked upon as a moral sovereign, he aroused in his followers a sense of guilt and an appreciation of the need for forgiveness. In R.V. 1V: 1,24 we find a typical prayer for forgiveness and see expressed something of the trust and confidence which the people had in him.

> "Far from us, far away drive thou destruction.
> Put from us e'en the sin we have committed."

Prof. MacDonald in "Vedic Mythology" holds that there is no hymn written to Varuna in which the prayer for forgiveness does not occur.

It is chiefly in these hymns to Varuna that occurs what is easily the most important ethical conception of the Rig. The term expressing the idea is "Rita" and the best translation seems to be Law or Order. It includes, as we have already seen in the hymns quoted, both natural and moral order. The dawn appears, the rivers flow, the sun, moon and stars follow their assigned courses, the seasons regularly change, all because of Rita. Also because of Rita, man is anabled properly to approach the gods and render his sacrificial services. "Under the yoking of Rita the sacrificial fire is kindled.--- Winds and waters are regulated by him and subject to his will. He brings not only day but night, when he sends all beings to rest." Dr. M. Schultz in "Hindu Practices", page 13.

But it is the moral conception of Rita with which we are most concerned for here too we find the same Law or Order operative. In R.V. X 12,4 we find Indra saying,

> "But thou, O Varuna, if thou dost love me,
> O King, discerning truth and right from falsehood, come and

Lord and Ruler of my kingdom."

Likewise in V11,83, 9:

"The one in battle-conflicts slays the demon foes,
The other evermore his sacred statutes guards."

Probably the clearest ethical conception we find in this connection is where Rita is linked with truth. "All falsehood, Mitra-Varuna, ye conquer, and closely cleave unto the law eternal." R.V.1:152,1. "Truth is the base that bears the earth." R.V.X 85,1. "Mitra-Varuna, born in law, true to law, the strengtheners of law, haters of the false." R.V. V11: 66,13.

Thus we find the conception of Truth existing at the center of the Universe. This being so, they conceived the idea that in men's lives there should be truth of word and conduct. In R.V. X:9,8 the cleansing water is asked to wash far away from the worshippers, the sin of falsehood. In R.V. V:12 we find them asking Agni,"Who guard the dwelling place of falsehood? Who are protectors of the speech of liars?" Men who bear false witness, those who cheat, defraud or steal are condemned.

It is thus evident that Rita stands for a moral order in the Universe and that it stands against falsehood and sin. Bloomfield says in his "Religion of the Veda",page 126, "We have in connection with Rita a pretty complete system of Ethics, a kind of Counsel of Perfection." Farquhar, on the other hand, says that few scholars would agree with this statement. Undoubtedly in this idea of Law and Order at the center of the Universe, together with its emphasis on righteousness as a requirement for fellowship with the Supreme, we do find a germ that has great possibilities for the growth of an ethical system. But having said that we have said about all that can be claimed for "the pretty complete system" for we search in vain for any definite guide to ones conduct, or just how righteousness is to be achieved and unrighteousness avoided. We do find certain

hymns praising certain virtues and condemning certain practices.

For instance R.V. X,117 is in praise of charity:

"The gods inflict not hunger as a means to kill:
Death frequently befalls even satiated men.
The charitable giver's wealth melts not away,
The niggard never finds a man to pity him.

Who, of abundant food possessed, makes hard his heart,
Toward a needy and decrepit suppliant
Whom once he courted, come to pray to him for bread;
A man like this as well finds none to pity him.

He is the liberal man who helps the beggar,
That, craving food, emaciated wanders,
And coming to his aid, when asked to succor,
Immediately makes him a friend hereafter.

He is no friend who gives not of his substance
To his devoted, intimate companion:
This friend should turn from him--here is no haven--
And seek a stranger elsewhere as a helper.

The wealthier man should give unto the needy,
Considering the course of life hereafter;
For riches are like chariot wheels revolving:
Now to one man they come, now to another.

The plough that cleaves the soil produces nurture;
He that bestirs his feet completes his journey.
The speaking Brahmin earns more than the silent;
A friend who gives is better than the niggard."

In R.V. 1X,112 we find friendship extolled:

They say that many a man has grown in friendship
Both stiff and stout: they send him not to the contests,
He with illusion unprolific wanders:
The speech he's learnt yields neither fruit nor blossom.

Whoever his devoted friend abandons,
In speech for him there's no participation,
And what he hears, he hears without perception;
For such a man knows not the path of virtue.

True friends rejoice when their companion famous
Returns from the assembly hall a victor.
He drives away reproach and wins them nurture:
He is sent out as fitted for the contest.

Another didactic hymn dealing with the sin of gambling is R.V.X: 34.

On high trees born and in a windy region
The danglers, rolling on the dice board, cheer me.
Like Soma draught from Mujavant's great mountain,
The rousing nut Vibhidaka has pleased me.

She wrangles not with me nor is she angry:
To me and comrades she was ever kindly.
For dice that only luckless throws effected
I've driven away from home a wife devoted.

Her mother hates me, she herself rejects me:
For one is such distress there is no pity.
I find a gambling man is no more useful
Than is an aged horse that's in the market.

Others embrace the wife of him who chattels
The eager dice have striven hard to capture;
And father,mother, brothers say about him:
"We know him not; lead him away a captive."

When to myself I think; 'I'll not go with them,
I'll stay behind my friends that go to gamble',
And those brown nuts, thrown down, have raised their voices,
I go,like wench, straight to the place of meeting.

Grieved is the gambler's wife by him abandoned,
Grieved, too, his mother as he aimless wanders.
Indebted, fearing, he desiring money
At night approaches other people's houses.

Play not with dice, but cultivate thy tillage,
Enjoy thy riches, deeming them abundant.
There are thy cows, there thy wife, O gambler:
This counsel Savitar the noble gives thee.

This raises the question as to their conception of sin. It included, as we have seen above, those who were guilty of moral misdemeanors and also those who failed to observe strictly their religious responsibilties to the gods. They were held responsible, not only for sins committed by themselves, but also for those committed by their ancestors and in certain cases for those committed by their friends. Even though a sin were committed unknowingly,one was responsible.

O Aditi and Varuna and Mitra,
Forgive us any sin we may have committed.
May we obtain the light, secure and spacious,
O Indra; may long darkness never reach us.
R.V. 11:27,14

In the hymns for forgiveness, one does not discover any particular remorse for having erred. The chief concern seems to be the receiving of pardon and the assurance that punishment is to be escaped.

Provide, O Soma-Rudra, for our bodies all needful medicines
to heal and cure us.
Set free and draw away the sin committed which we still have
inherent in our persons. R.V.V1, 74,3.

What has become of those our former friendships,
When we two held erstwhile unbroken converse?
O sovereign Varuna, thy lofty mansion,
Thy home, I entered, with its thousand portals.

Who is, O Varuna, thy constant kinsman,
Once dear, though sinful now, he claims thy friendships.
As guilty may we not, O wizard, suffer:
Do thou, O sage, grant shelter to thy praiser.

O may we in these fixed abodes abiding,
Now from the lap of Aditi find favour.
May from his noose king Varuna release us.
Ye gods protect us evermore with blessings. R.V.V11,88:5,6,7

The idea of being "released" from sin is quite common:

Loosen the bonds, O Varuna, that hold me,
Loosen the bonds, above, between, and under.
So in thy holy law may we, made sinless,
Belong to Aditi, O thou, Aditya. R.V. 1:24,15.

There are many passages similar to the following:

If we, men as we are, have sinned against the gods,
Through want of thought, in weakness, or through insolence,
Absolve us from the guilt and make us free from the sin,
O Savitri, alike among both gods and man. R.V. 1V: 54,3.

Certain prayers for forgiveness called for some act to accompany the request. For instance there was a self-baptismal ceremony performed by the worshipper. As he sprinkled water on his head, he would chant the following:

O, waters, give us health, bestow on us
Vigour and strength, so shall I see enjoyment.
Rain down your dewy treasures o'er our path.
Like loving mothers, pour on us your blessing,
Make us partakers of your sacred essence.
We come to you for cleansing from all guilt
Cause us to be productive, make us prosper. R.V. X:9

Another prayer that is much in use today, was claimed by Manu, when repeated three times, to cleanse the suppliant from the most grievous of sins:

From glowing heat sprang all existing things,
Yea, all the order of this universe(Rita)
Thence also night and heaving ocean sprang;
And next to heaving ocean sprang the year,
Dividing day from night. All mortal men
Who close the eyelid are his subjects, he,
The great Disposer, made in due succession
Sun, moon, and sky, earth, middle air, and heaven. R.V.X:190.

As an example of prayer, asking for aid in overcoming temptation that will be experienced later, the following is quite remarkable:

May Sun and Anger, may the lords of anger
Preserve me from my sins of pride and passion.
Whate'er the nightly sins of thought, word and deed,
Wrought by my mind, my speech, my hands, my feet,
Wrought through my appetite and sensual organs,
May the departing night remove them all!
In thy immortal light, O radiant Sun,
I offer up myself and this my guilt. R.V.X:25

In connection with the punishment which they were so anxous to avoid, a hell or abysmal station was pictured:

Like youthful women, without brothers, straying,
Like dames who hate their lords, of evil conduct,
They who are full of sin, untrue, unfaithful,
They have engendered this abysmal station. R.V.1V:5,5.

But on the whole the nature of the punishment was vague and indefinite.

From this it is evident that the most important feature of the Rig Veda from the ethical point of view, is the conception which was developed regarding the gods. As we have seen this was most marked in the case of Varuna. In him we find an ethical conception of the Supreme, closely akin to that developed by the Hebrews. With these gods, to whom they felt themselves, in some way, to be closely related, they came to see possibilities of working relations, a means of protection from evil, a source of blessing and a pattern for their daily conduct. They saw in the Supreme, as represented by Varuna, a moral being who was interested in them as individuals. Just how their belief influenced their daily life and conduct, we have no way of knowing. But gods who love, inspire, forgive, reward and punish must inevitably have quickened somewhat the conscience of their followers and have created, at least the beginnings, of moral

responsibility. Gods likewise who are anxious to assist the weak and share humanity's burdens, must make their devotees more charitable, generous and merciful. We are safe in concluding that they were better men because of the light that was breaking across their restricted horizon.

The Atharva Veda, the most important of the remaining three, was considerably later than thr Rig. In it there is but little that will interest us in our study. The chief elements of the earlier Veda, devotion to the gods, seem largely to have been lost sight of for here, even though the same gods are still recognized, they now take a very subordinate part. The Atharva Veda is a collection of magic spells dealing with a world haunted by all sorts of evil spirits. Most of the hymns explain practices and methods for use in the curing of diseases. Charms for insuring health, happiness and prosperity and for protection in marriage are given in detail. The gods have now lost most of their ethical character and instead of being thought of as they were in the Rig, they are now considered in terms of magic and sorcery, as instruments by which personal desires may be obtained.

The belief that the dead existed as ghosts and spirits prevailed and it was therefore necessary to prepare feasts for them at which times elaborate ceremonies were performed. Thus it was but natural that these spirits should grow to be more influential than the gods.

The sacrifices which were performed, to which the gods were asked, were in the nature of a bargain. A certain god, or in some instances several gods, were invited to attend the sacrifice. If the sacrifice was performed according to the exact letter of the law, it was then assumed that the wish or concession asked would be granted The god had no choice but to conform. The ethical note was fast

disapperaing.

But slight mention is made of any of the so-called virtues. Truth speaking is mentioned, as, for instance, when the God Soma is claimed to favour the truth speaker: "Soma by no means favours the wicked man, nor the Kshatriya who maintains anything falsely; he smites the demon; he smites the speaker of untruth; both lie within reach of Indra." A.V.V111.4.12,13.

An interesting section dealing with the proper relationships within the family is found in A.V. 111:30,1-3. "Like-heartedness, like-mindedness, non-hostility do I make for you; do ye show affection one toward the other, as the inviolable cow toward her calf when born. Be the son submissive toward the father, like-minded with the mother; let the wife to the husband speak words full of honey, wealful. Let not brother hate brother, nor sister, sister; becoming accordant of like courses, speak ye words auspiciously."

But there is nothing impressive. The development of the intimate, personal, relationship with the Supreme, which we saw had developed during the time of the Rig should have been a fitting foundation for a future growth in religious faith. But as Dr. Macnichol says, "The great tragedy of the period was that for some unaccountable reason, the high ethical note sounded in the hymns to Varuna, seems to have faded gradually away, and during this period, is practically lost sight of." The ethical note largely disappears.

One development of this period that we shall see more of later in our study is the beginnings of the Brahman-Atman idea. In the Rig. 10,90 Purusha is spoken of as a primaeval man whose sacrifice resulted in the creation of the world. In the Atharva, Purusha is identified with Brahman, the highest principle of being. It was claimed that Purusha was enabled to do his work because Brahman was immanent in him. Here we have the beginnings of the pantheistic conception

of the Universe, which played so large a part in the thinking of the Upanishads.

The Brahmanas form the next group of writings after we leave the period of the early vedas. The time of there compilation is somewhere between 1,000 and 300 B.C. On the whole they are vague, unintelligible, indefinite as to their meaning, and tedious reading. They were the work of the Brahman priesthood and give minute instructions for the performance of the various religious rites and ceremonies, of which they were now completely in charge.

It would seem that the simple trust of the earlier days had largely been lost. During the Rig, the sacrifices were simple, being performed, not only by priests, but generally by a patriarchal head of a family or clan, at any time and place, when the simple folk desired to express their feelings toward,or have fellowship with,their gods. However the deterioration which we saw had begun in the Atharva was even more marked in the Brahmanas. The simple ceremonial sacrifice was now superseded by a highly complicated system, ritual coming to play a very prominent part in the worship.

Another feature of the times that would play an important part, was the fact that the life of the people was gardually changing and becoming more complex. The average man was busier in the more secular pursuits of raising crops, hunting and fighting. He had neither the time nor inclination to learn the tedious details of the ceremony. Wars became numerous and the religious note naturally became less ethical and more sensuous.

Accordingly an increasingly large measure of responsibility fell to the lot of the priests and it was but natural that they came to have an almost complete authority over the religious ceremony. He saw that it was to his interests to develope the rites into a

system so complex and minute that no one, other than himself, could perform ~~them~~ it. This gave him what he desired, an exclusive control over the sacerdotal functions.

The sacrifice became shrouded in deepest mystery, so that the worshipper had little idea as to what it all meant. The greatest concern was that the performance be carried out according to the exact letter of the law, for on this extreme exactness depended entirely the efficacy of the sacrifice. If each detail was properly executed, then the gods were forced to grant the request. The inevitable consequence of this was that the gods grew less in their influence while the sacrifice assumed a larger measure of importance. The gods that formerly had affected men so profoundly lost their significance and meaning. The priest was much more concerned in the amount of the sacrifice which was offered--for he got most of it as his private share--than he was in the longing within the hearts of his worshippers for fellowship and light. The former meaning of the sacrifice now lost its significance to the people and the result was the development of a blind, utterly confused superstition, a soul deadening ritualism, devoid of moral significance.

One other point should be noted here. Not only have the gods lost in their significance, but a change has taken place in their relative importance. We saw in the Rig how Varuna had won a place of distinction amongst all the gods because of his moral qualities. The tendency in the Brahmanas is seen in that now he is practically lost sight of and Prajapati is given the place of most significance. The unfortunate part is that Prajapati's character is exactly at variance with that of Varuna's. He is loose of morals, his incest with his daughter is recounted several times, and nothing can be discovered in his character that would tend to ennoble those who sought fellowship with him. In addition the Apsarases, "heavenly

nymphs of loose morals" are given considerable prominence. Another deteriorating influence then, as now, was the lack of ethical qualities in the priesthood. The following quotation will show that there was no moral standard by which they were chosen. "Even if the performing priest is no proper Brahman, or even though he may be pronounced to be an ill-reputed man, this sacrifice nevertheless goes up to the gods, and becomes not polluted by the contaginn with a wicked man, (as in this case the performing priest is)" A.B. 1:16 Thus the ethical conceptions held regarding the gods and the beginnings of lofty thinking, had now been all but stifled by the magic, sorcery, and superstitious belief in the presence of spirits.

We have already noticed the development of the Brahman-Atman idea in the time of the Atharva Veda. In the Brahmanas we find the idea considerably developed. It came during this period to be looked upon as the "self" of the Universe, and as "the highest metaphysical principle which was thus identified with Brahman" As time went on these two metaphysical principles came to be considered as one. Gradually the Atman, the Self, became identical with the almighty power of Brahman. This seems to have led to the belief that back of all reality was one Supreme, the self-existent Brahman, the Atman, the Supreme Reality. That the Atman in man was not a part of, but was the Atman of the Universe. This was an epoch making doctrine in India's religious history and we shall see its significance under the next devision.

It was in this period that caste got its beginnings and few things if any, have had a more lasting effect upon the Indian people, than this peculiar system of social divisions.

As the priests grew in power and influence, they saw that a certain amount of protection was necessary for them. All of the people were not willing to accept their authority or give them the place

of influence which they were claiming for themselves. Then there was always the danger from the hill tribes who were eagerly watching for an opportunity to rush into the wealthier centers and loot the people. So to meet this situation an army was created whose only function was that of protection. This created the problem of arranging for some stable method of production. If the army were to give all of its time in military duties, then some means must be devised of feeding it. So an industrial class was organized, its sole function being to produce food. They in turn were to be protected by the warrior group. These three groups, the priests, the warriors, the producers, formed the twice born and were permitted to wear the sacred thread. The fourth group consisted of those who labored for the other three groups, doing the more menial tasks. Authorities seem generally to be agred that this in general was the development of the system which today holds the millions in its iron clad compartments.

We find the first mention of the caste idea in R.V. Mandala, X:90: "With Purusha as victim, they performed a sacrifice. When they divided him,how did they cut him up? What was his mouth,what were his arms, and what his thighs and feet? The Brahman was his mouth, the kingly soldier was made his arms, the husbandman his thighs, the servile Sudra issued from his feet." In the law codes of Manu we have minute instructions for the work and behavior of the various castes. In Atri Samhita, Chapter 1, 12-16 we find a fairly explicit division of duties: "Those men,who perform their respective duties, become, by following their own works, beloved of the people, even if they live at a distance. The works of the Priest are to celebrate sacrifices, to make gifts and to study the Vedas; to accept presents, to deliver instructions in the Vedas and to officiate at sacrifices. To celebrate sacrifices, to make gifts, and to study the Vedas, are the religious works of the Kshatriya (soldier caste); to live by arms, to

protect mankind are his means of livelihood. To make gifts, to study the Vedas, and to celebrate sacrifices are the religious work of the Vaisya (third, or agricultural caste) and to follow agriculture and other productive labors is his secular task. To serve the twice born is the religious work of the Shudras (fourth caste) and the work of art is his secular task. By following these instructions which have been described by me---the men of all castes will come to great honor in this world. By following his own religion (remaining in his own caste) even the Shudra enjoys the celestial region."

It should be noted that in the Brahmanas there is no recognition of the idea of ceremonial defilement, that results from close contact with men of lower castes, such as eating together, that is prevalent today. There was no idea in the minds of the framers of the system that it would ultimately take on the characteristics that it later developed. It was but a sensible matter of expediency and while it undoubtedly exaggerated the importance of the place which the priest considered himself as holding, it can not be charged that he intentionally planned for the rigid separation as we now see it.

In looking at the caste system and the evils depending on it, we are safe in saying that in it we see the greatest unethical development connected with the entire religious history of Hinduism. Granting that it may have had some justification in the past, it would seem that there is but little to recommend it today. It is claimed by some that there is considerable value gained in the stability of occupation as handed down from father to son. That as one is born into his particular station in life, with his vocation definitely settled for him, an efficiency is thus gained that otherwise would not be possible. On the other hand, in actual practice, it would seem, in the majority of cases, to stifle ambition, leaving no room for the expression of one's individuality. Position and

and leadership depend, not upon moral attainment and nobleness of life, but upon the exigencies of one's birth. It violates the sacredness of the personality of the individual and is thoroughly anti-social. Through the centuries it has blighted the prospects of countless millions. No matter how brilliant, how promising, or how capable a boy may be of taking a large place in the affairs of the world, strictly speaking, if born in the lowest group, in that group he remains with all doors of opportunity closed, bound with fetters unbreakable.

The chief obstacle in eliminating caste, or at least in altering its iron-clad rules, is the fact that the law of caste and its observance, is regarded by the Hindu as the supreme claim of his faith. We shall return to this point in our study of the Bhagavad Gita.

Another interesting development of this period and one that has much more to recommend it, is the plan of life, as outlined in the law codes of Manu for members of the higher castes. It provided for the division of the lives of the twice born into four periods, giving most explicit instructions as to one's life and conduct during each. First there was the period when the student went to live in the home of his guru or teacher, probably an aged Brahman, undergoing for an indefinite length of time a rigorous training. During this period he studied vedic lore, and was led to think particularly regarding the demands for chastity, temperance and obedience to the higher powers. The first act of this new life is known as the investiture. This is one of the two most sacred sacraments of the students life, the other being at the time of his marriage. The investiture symbolizes his spiritual regeneration and only those who have experienced it are entitled to wear the sacred thread, and to be known as the twice born. The old teacher, quoting words from the Rig Veda performs "the laying

on of hands." Then the student in silence performs the first act of his regenerated life, which consists in placing a piece of wood upon the sacred fire. Then he repeats after his teacher the Savitri, that lines that are claimed by some to be the most oft repeated and the most celebrated, of all the stanzas of the Rig: Just why it should be so, it is difficult to determine.

Of Savitar, the heavenly,
That longed-for glory may we win!
And may himself inspire our prayers.

Then in due course the guru, or teacher, with his hands placed upon the students heart, repeats the following:

In subjection to me, thy heart I put.
Let thy thinking follow my thinking.
In my word rejoice thou with all thy soul.

"Let thy thinking" etc. would not seem to indicate much of a spiritual regeneration. The injunction to follow implicitly the thinking of the teacher has within it a fatal weakness.

In the Law Codes of Manu, Harita Samhita, Chapter three, we find fairly minute instructions given regarding the conduct of the student. "Having been invested with the sacred thread, a person should live in the family of his preceptor and do good unto it by deeds, mind and words. He should lead a life of celibacy, sleep on the earth, adore the Fire, and offer unto his preceptor pitchers full of water, sacrificial fire. He should study the Vedas.----He should learn the many and varied rules from his preceptor. --- He should beg alms in the morning and evening.---After the termination of the evening adoration, he shoul salute the feet of his preceptor and reverentially meditate upon his parents.---Shorn of pride, the student should obey the commands of his preceptor.-----A Brahmacharin (student) of firm vows, who, carefully following the instructions of his teacher, renounces his body, is not born again in this world.

The second period was known as that of the householder, or the domestic mode of life. The man must now marry, beget children, and perform all the duties that fall to the lot of a married man. Quoting from chapter four: "After having completed the vedic studies, a person should wed a maiden of a different family, having a brother, endued with auspicious marks, perfect limbs and good character." Then follow minute and tedious instructions. He is enjoined to support those who are dependent upon him, should instruct in the lore of the vedas, those who join him as disciples and should be obedient to the king. He is instructed to be charitable and friendly. " If a guest not seen or known before, comes, he should, rising up, adore him with a welcome, offer of water and a seat." "On a guest being welcomed, the Fires of a Householder become gratified. On a seat being offered, the King of Celestials becomes pleased." "If a mendicant arrives at a house before food is offered to the Viswasevas, one should dismiss him by giving him alms." When Yatins arrive at a house, one should respectfully offer them alms, for he should think without a shadow of doubt that Vishnu is himself a Yatin." "O ye leading twice-born ones, charities must be made by a householder--the gift of gold, cow and earth." "He who satisfies the duties of a householder, described by me, attains the dignity of a Brahman. He acquires the most excellent knowledge and by it attains emancipation, oh ye most excellent ones." "O ye Vpras, thus the eternal Code of Duties, has been described by me to you. If a householder carefully performs the duties laid down for the domestic mode of life, he becomes united with the God Hari."

The third stage was known as the hermit period, when the devotee goes alone into the forest to engage in severe austerities. His chief aim is to forget all worldly desires and attachment. Quoting from chapter five: "Having seen sons and grandsons, and his hair grow grey, a householder, consigning the care of his wife to his sons, or with her, should enter the forest." Then follow instructions as to

his mode of life, the method of offering oblations, of eating and drinking. "Stationed in the midst of five fires in the summer time, living without shelter in the rainy season and remaining inside the water in the dewy season, he should spend his time practising penances. An ascetic, going to the forest, who, abstaining from speech, meditates on Brahman--who is beyond the ken of senses-- till the destruction of his body, becomes glorified in the region of Brahma. He, who living in a forest and being endued with mental abstraction and self-restraint, practices penances, goes, freed from sin, purified and endued with a quiet mind, to the ancient, divine Purusha."

The last period was the wandering ascetic stage where the man wanders from place to place, entirely dependent upon alms. He has already quenched all worldly desire and now he must take what-ever comes, without protest or murmur, caring not as to when he gains his release. Quoting from chapter six: "I shall now describe the most excellent fourth order, by following which with reverence, one is released from the fetters of worldly existence." The mendicant, bidding farewell for ever to his relatives and friends and having performed his own funeral rite, he takes the sacred Fire and starts upon his wanderings, taking no notice as to the direction which his feet may take. After the usual instructions as to bathing, eating etc. the chapter closes as follows: "If a Sannyasin be thus religiously bent, be of a quiescent soul, impartial unto all creatures and self-restrained, he attains unto the highest station from which he does not return. The holder of the triple staff--who withholding the senses from the external objects, gradually acts thus--attains to the most exalted station of Vishnu, freed from the fetters of worldly existence."

I have quoted at such length from the four-fold plan of life because of the influence which this idea has had throughout the centuries. There are in India today, as an out-growth of this idea,

according to Government statistics,nearly five million mendicants, wandering about the cities, villages and rural areas, the great majority of whom are unspeakably filthy in body and morals, stunted in intellect, and degrading in their influence. On the other hand there are some of this number to whom the above application would be a gross injustice. Pure in motive and life, following the path as best they are able, they strive toward perfection, as they conceive it,the realization of the individual soul with Brahman. Applying to them the standard of ethics, usually followed in the western world, we generally should have to say that their contribution was negative. For sooner or later we find the sincere seeker withdrawing from the world, seeking seclusion in the forests or the fastnesses of the Himalayas. But keeping in mind what was said in the beginning,as to the subjective value of moral activity, one cannot but feel that through the centuries and even today, there are those of this smaller group, who have succeeded in living lives of real ethical attainment, not only because of the personal sacrifices made, but because of their ability to enter into the deeper experiences of life, catching possibly a much larger conception of ultimate Truth than do most of those who labor in a busy and confusing world. There can be no doubt but what there are real saints living in mountain caves and the deeps of the forests and when our vision is broadened we shall possibly understand something of the contribution which they have been making. There are those who feel that in this very feature, probably slightly adapted, Hinduism and India have a powerful contribution to make to a distracted and divided world.

We pass now to the next division of our study,--

The Upanishads: They are an out-growth of the wilderness experience which we have just studied. In them we find the source of the dominant philosophy of India. "They contain all the profound doctrines

of human experience, being both a philosophy and a religion." They exert a profound influence on the life of India today and are practically the only parts of the Veda regarded with respect by the educated classes. They contain two great doctrines:

A: The unity of the self, Atman, with Brahman. We saw this idea stressed during the Brahmanas but it is in the Upanishads that we find it shaping into a real philosophy. The one reality, the in ground of the universe, is a principle called Brahman. He is the inmost essence of all things; the first principle, so far as we understand it, in the universe. Atman may be thought of as the inner self in man. Generally the terms Brahman and Atman are used synonomously.

Deussen in "The Philosophy of the Upanishads" page 38 holds that Brahman is the unknown that needs to be explained while Atman is the known through which the other unknown finds its explanation. He goes on to say that if we consider the Brahman as the cosmical principle of the Universe and the Atman as the psychical, the fundamental thought of the Upanishads may be expressed by the simple formula, Brahman equals Atman. That is, Brahman is the principle we perceive in all existence. It creates, preserves and sustains all things and finally receives back into itself again everything that is. And yet this "eternal, infinite, divine power" is identical with the Atman in us--that is with our individual essential self or soul. This union of the Brahman and the Atman, this identity of the divine and the soul, is the central thought of the Upanishads. It is succinctly expressed in Chand.6,8 "That are thou." and in Brih. 1,4, "I am Brahman." The great pilgrimage for man is ended when this fundamental conception is appreciated and realized. The eager quest which they were making is well expressed in Brihad-Aranyaka, 1,3:28, "From the unreal lead me to the real. From darkness lead me to light. From death lead me to immortality."

But how is this quest to be realized? By coming to see that the objects about us in reality do not exist. To suppose that they do is but an illusion. The things that reveal themselves to us without effort are not the true reality. If we so think we are sadly deluded. All that exists is Brahman. Salvation is won, when the individual, eliminating all worldly desire, attains this knowledge. "He who knows Brahma, as the real and knowledge, as the infinite--he obtains all desires." Taittiriya,2,1. "He (who knows Brahma) is able to make any conquest, achieve any attainment: he can remove mountains, slay his enemies, while he himself is safe." Kaushitaki,2,13. "Knowledge alone renders efficacious or meritorious any act which one may choose to perform." Chand.5:24,1,2. "He verily who knows it (the true doctrine) thus striking off evil, becomes established in the most excellent way; in the endless heavenly world; yea, he becomes established." Kena:35.

Thus the way to salvation now becomes the path of knowledge. Realise the absolute existence of Brahman and release is achieved. Their conception of the absolute existence is seen in the following: "In the beginning, my dear, there was that which is, one only without a second. Others indeed say, 'In the beginning there was that only which is not, one only without a second, and from that which is not, that which is was born.' But how could this be my dear,--he, the teacher, said--how could that which is, be born of that which is not? Therefore, my dear, only that which is, was in the beginning, one only, without a second." Chhand: V1:1,1,2. "In the beginning this was non-existent. From it was born what exists. That made its own Self, therefore it is called the Self-made. Because it is self-made it is the marrow of things. If a man gains this marrow, he is blessed." Taitt:11,8. The self wished, may I become many, may I engender! It performed penance. After having performed penance it created the

universe. Having created all that belongs to the universe, it entered into it. As soon as it entered into it, it became the existent." Taitt, 11,6.

In all this we cannot but be impressed by the absence of any moral implications in the doctrine by which salvation is to be won. The problem is primarily not one of human conduct. Realize the unity of the Atman with Brahman and the misery which results from the belief that the soul of man can be affected by material conditions is at an end. For just as the river is absorbed in the depths of the ocean, so shall the soul, Atman, be absorbed in the All-Soul, Brahman, when it has attained sufficient knowledge to realize it. Apart from this accurate knowledge, all is vanity. Good works are of no avail, for they like bad works are but an illusion and therefore cannot count. Strictly speaking the moral incentive was all but entirely lacking. The world was not condemned because it was bad but because it existed.

There are passages which definitely state that he who attains to knowledge is beyond the pale of good or evil. "He who knows me thus, by no deed of his is his life harmed, not by the murder of his mother, nor by the murder of his father, not by theft, not by the killing of a Brahman. If he is going to commit a sin the bloom does not depart from his face." Kaush. 111,1. Or again, "He (who has knowledge) is the highest person. He moves about there, laughing playing, and rejoicing, be it with women, carriages, or relatives, never minding that body into which he was born." Chhand.V111.12,3. Farquhar says,"When the highest good is reached, ethical distinctions are transcended."

From the quotations already made, it is evident that in the Upanishads a pantheistic view of the Universe was held. Brahman created the Universe and then entered into it, thus he, himself, be-

coming the Universe. In other words all that existed was Brahman. As the terms Brahman and Atman are used synonomously, so Brahman and all that exists became synonymous. And while it is true that the doctrine that matter did not exist was held, that material things were but an illusion, they were faced with the fact that in reality the Universe did exist before their eyes. This issue was met by admitting that there was a material Universe but that it did not conflict with their ideal because the Universe was Brahman. There are some beautiful verses illustrating this conception in Kath.5;9-11.

> The light, as one penetrates into space,
> And yet adapts itself to every form;
> So the inmost self of all beings dwells
> Enwrapped in every form, and yet remains outside.
>
> The air, as one,penetrates into space,
> And yet adapts itself to every form;
> So the inmost self of all beings dwells,
> Enwrapped in every form and yet remains outside,
>
> The sun, the eye of the whole universe,
> Remains pure from the defects of eyes external to it;
> So the inmost self of all beings remains,
> Pure from the sufferings of the external worlds.

The universe did exist but the only part of it that was real was Brahman. "The Atman is beneath and above, in the west and in the east, in the south and in the north; the Atman is this entire universe." Chand.7:25,2.

> Fire is his head, his eyes sun and moon,
> His ears the regions of the sky,
> The revealed Veda is his voice,
> The wind his breath, the universe his heart, from his
> feet is the earth,
> He is the inmost self in all things. Mund. 2.1:4

Brahman was also the active principle animating the Universe:

"He is all-effecting, all-wishing, all-smelling, all-tasting, embracing all, silent, untroubled." Chand. 3.14:2.

Passages illustrating the fact that the Atman in man is the same as the soul of the universe have already been quoted. Many additional ones might be given, as for instance the following:

"What that subtle being, that unknowable, is of which this whole universe is composed, that is the real, that is the soul, that art thou." Chand.6.8--16. "----This is my soul in my heart, smaller that a grain of rice or barley, or a mustard seed, than a grain or the kernel of a grain of mustard seed; this is my soul in my heart, greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the heaven, greater than these worlds." Chand.3.14:2 "In truth, great as is this world-space, so great is this space within the heart; in it are contained both the heaven and the earth; both fire and wind, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars, and whatever is possessed or not possessed in this life, all that is therein contained." Chand.8.1:3. "Now however the light which shines there beyond the heaven behind all things, behind each, in the highest worlds, the highest of all, that is assuredly the light that is here within men." Chand.3.13:7.
It is interesting to note that this first principle that dwells within men, has a definite location within a cavity of the heart: "In truth, this great unborn self, is that among the vital organs which consists of knowledge. Here within the heart is a cavity, therein he resides who is lord of the universe, the governor of the universe, the chief of the universe; he is not exalted by good works, he is not degraded by evil works; he is the lord of the universe, he is the governor of living beings, he is the protector of living beings, he is the bridge that holds asunder these worlds, and prevents them from clashing together." Brih. 4.4.22.

Thus the underlying idea of the Upanishads centers about a strict pantheistic monism.

What are we to conclude to have been the actual result in men's lives as they strove to achieve then identity of the soul with Brahman? We are faced in the Upanishads, as we are in all the sacred writings

writings of the Hindus, with confusion arising from conflicting statements and injunctions. While it is true that in the main the Upanishads dwelt upon the unreality of all save the Brahman-Atman, yet they were forced, because of the fact that they were living in a world where men did enjoy life, to recognise some of the resultant social and moral implications, and to admit that in the attainment of this knowledge of the identity of the Brahman-Atman, certain moral obligations were imperative.

In their effort to attain deliverance a certain preparatory discipline was essential and in this connection we find our largest field for the application of ethical standards. We have seen how there was a four-fold plan of life outlined for the seeker after truth. In the Upanishads we find this definite and rigorous system commended, although the emphasis is somewhat different from that given in the laws of Manu. Deussen in The Philosophy of the Upanishads, page 368 thinks that there were but three stages recognized. In Brih. 1V.4:22 we find the features of the four-fold life mentioned but not in definite stages. "Brahmanas seek to know him by the study of the Veda, by sacrifice, by gifts, by penance, by fasting, and he who knows him becomes a muni." In Chhand. 11.23:1 the four stages are recognized more clearly, although the order is different than in Manu. "There are three branches of the law. Sacrifice, study and charity are the first. Austerity is the second, and to dwell as a student in the house of a teacher, is the third. All these obtain the worlds of the blessed; but only he who is firmly grounded in Brahman obtains immortailty."

These, and many others we could quote, indicate that considerable importance was placed upon this method of preparing themselves for the time when they would be able to attain the ideal.

We have seen how this preparatory pathway included such elementary duties as study, reverence,loyalty, friendship, hospitality, charity, truthfulness, honesty,purity, austerity, sacrifice, etc. In addition we find that the Upanishads held that certain courses of action proved insuperable obstacles to the attainment of the chief end. For instance, sensual enjoyment was condemned. "The good and the pleasant approach man; the wise goes round about them and distinguishes them. Yea, the wise prefers the good to the pleasant, but the fool chooses the pleasant through greed and avarice. ----Fools dwelling in darkness, wise in their own conceit, and puffed up with vain knowledge, go round and round, staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind. The Hereafter never rises before the eyes of the foolish child,deluded by the delusion of wealth. 'This is the world',he thinks, 'there is no other'; Thus he falls again and again under death's sway." In some instances, the wicked act is sternly condemned. "The thief of gold and the spirit drinker, the murderer of a Brahman, the defiler of his teacher's bed, these four perish, and he who associates with them is the fifth." Chand.5.10:9
Again, "In my kingdom there is no thief, no churl, no drunkard, None who neglects the sacrifice or the sacred lore,no adulterer or courtesan." Chand.5.11:5

Thus,contradictory though it was to their central conception, we do find that they had a place for a social ethic. The exigencies of the life of the day forced them to a justification of, for instance, the life of the"householder". They recognized that his position was one of honour and righteousness, as well as of moral responsibility It was an ample demonstration of the fact,that religion, be it ever so elaborate and systematized, if without a moral content, is lacking in an element that is most essential. Religion separated from morals is a soul-deadening insitution.

B: The second doctrine of importance in the Upanishads was that of Karma and Transmigration. Transmigration was probably borrowed from some primitive people but karma was a Brahman creation. The doctrine grew out of the great question of inequality which ever was forced upon the attention of the people. Some men were poor, others rich; some were sick,others well; some suffered great misfortune while others were well favoured; some seemed to have all that made for happiness and enjoyment, others apparently were devoid of all that gave pleasure. The question was, why are the gods good to some, angry with others? Is God unjust? In attempting to wrestle with this Jobian question they hit upon a unique answer. At the heart of the universe is complete justice. Back of all is a great moral law and all men are subject to it. For every deed committed, there must be an exact recompense, the evil deed being repaid with misery, the good deeds being rewarded according to their kind. These rewards of character are not to be paid in this life but are to be experienced in a later existence. Our deeds "Follow us from afar and what we have been makes us what we are."

This idea fitted in very well with their conception of the soul. The soul always had existed and it always would. As it is abstract thought and knowledge, it can only think and be conscious, as it exists in a body or substance that is capable of experiencing sensations. It can only function as it has a body. But as we have seen, this union of the body and spirit, results in misery. It is a bondage. The chief aim is to be released and reabsorbed in Brahman, from whence it came. But how is the soul to be released from this bondage. The Upanishad answers that one being held accountable for his acts, can only gain release by "A recognition of the soul's true nature," We have seen that the true nature of the soul is absolutely identical with the all-pervading spirit of

the universe. But if the soul had to pay for its actions, how could it do so without returning to earth in some material body. It would then be reborn in the station of life that its previous existence would justify. If a man made steady and persistent effort, lived nobly and worthily, sought earnestly to know God, he would advance correspondingly up the scale toward perfection and ultimately he would gain his release. On the other hand the man who followed vice and evil, plunged ever deeper in degradation, thus giving the material universe a firmer hold upon him.

In Chand.5.10:7 we find the law stated thus: "Accordingly those who are of pleasant conduct here--the prospect is indeed that they will enter a pleasant womb, either the womb of a Brahman or the womb of a Kshatriya or the womb of a Vaisya. But those who are of stinking conduct here, the prospect is, indeed, that they will enter a stinking womb, either the womb of a dog, or the womb of a swine, or the womb of an outcaste." In Svetasvatara, 5.11:12 it is stated that, "According unto his deeds the embodied one successively assumes forms in various conditions; coarse and fine, many in number, the embodied one chooses forms according to his own qualities. Each subsequent cause of his union with them is seen to be because of the quality of his acts and of himself." In Kaush. 1.2 we find, "Either as a worm or as a moth, or as a fish or as a bird, or as a tiger---he is born here again according to his deeds, according to his knowledge." Many such could be quoted. One other type with a slightly different emphasis, stresses that whatever one most desires, that he will become. "A person consists of desires. And as his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap. Chhand.V111.2 states it thus: "He who desires the world of the fathers, by his mere will the fathers come to receive him, and having obtained the world of the fathers he is happy.--Whatever object

he is attached to, whatever object he desires, by his mere will it comes to him, and having obtained it, he is happy."

There are those who claim that this is one of the greatest moral incentives that any system has ever devised. As a man knows perfectly well that his every act will have its perfect reward, he will be spurred on in his efforts to do only those things that are worthy and that will result in his achieving his release. Here again we find the kernel of the ethical teachings of the Upanishads. In order to gain release, he must meet certain conditions. In meeting those conditions certain activities, distinctly ethical, both objectively and subjectively, are enjoined. Following the argument further, however, we find ourselves facing again the inevitable fact that in the Upanishads the highest good is in that state where all ethical distinctions are transcended. Thus viewing the question in its proper relationship, and granting that the transmigration theory does hold out a certain stimulus to worthy action, we are forced to conclude that the unethical side of the theory is more pronounced than the ethical. Good deeds, worthy and noble action, while contributing to the acquisition of merit, and aiding the soul in its effort to attain emancipation, are in no sense the method whereby the soul actually gains release from its karma. In other words morality is not the prime essential to emancipation. In the highest religious experience, morality has no place.

On the other hand, instead of giving one an inspiration for better living, it would seem that the incentive for worthy action, would largely be removed. The individual is placed in his present existence, the only one that he knows anything about, as the result of acts committed in some previous incarnation. Therefore he is suffering for something over which he has no control, for he does not even recall his previous lives. Why should he be held responsible

as responsibility is dependent upon continuous self experience. This he has not had.. Jones in his "India's Problem; Krishna or Christ" page 99 says,"Why should any moral being be put through a course of discipline, or be punished, for a past of which he has no knowledge? To inflict a punishment for any conduct or thought for which the memory does not bear evidence,nor conscience furnish assent, nor the whole realm of conscious experience reveal a trace, is both unethical and in deepest violation of the laws of being."

It would seem that this system of thought would lead to utter hopelessness. The individual has no chance. No matter how earnestly he may try, he will realize no value from his efforts till the next incarnation. That is altogether too remote a prospect for the average man to appreciate. Then too the individual has no personal relation to the Supreme. He can make no appeal to this power of justice; the idea of repentance and forgiveness does not occur. Thus it is an iron clad system with little hope and inspiration. Moral dynamic is largely lacking.

The Upanishads were too deep and too involved for the average man to appreciate. So gradually there seems to have grown up another system of thinking. Along with the purely reflective, speculative, intellectual effort, an emphasis was being placed on the more natural, emotional expression of the soul's longing for fellowship with its God. These two angles seem to have reacted on each other and from the partial fusion that resulted, the songs of the Bhagavad Gita were produced. In them the speculative element of the Upanishads was added to ~~with~~ by an emotional, an essential part in any religious theory.

There is much speculation regarding the origin of the Gita. Scholars are divided as to the probable dates of its compilation. Farquhar says,"The date of this poem, the earliest attempt made in India to rise to a theistic faith and theology, has caused endless

discussion." We gather from the epic itself that it is the record of a conversation between Krishna and Arjun, the Prince of India, on the battle field of Kurukshetra, just prior to the fateful battle. The conversation followed a question of Arjun in which he asks Krishna for advice upon a matter, which to him was a conflict of duties. He was a warrior. For such he had been trained. As such he received his support. Now he had appeared on the battle-field in his war chariot with Krishna, the Supreme Diety, as his charioteer. Plainly it was his duty to fight. But as he drew near his foes, he realized that some of them were friends and some were his relatives. (Quotations are from "The Song Celestial", translated by Arnold) "Krishna, as I behold, come here to shed, their common blood, yon concourse of kin, My members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth, a shudder fills my body. ---nothing do I foresee save woe and wail. Nought of good can spring from mutual slaughter. Lo, I hate triumph and domination, wealth and ease, thus sadly won." Page 4.

They were living in the midst of a certain social order and he felt it his duty to preserve it. Yet to kill, meant its overthrow.

> "By overthrow of houses perisheth
> Their sweet continuous household piety,
> And rites neglected, piety extinct,
> Enters impiety upon that home;
> Its women grow unwomaned, whence they spring
> Mad passions, and the mingling up of castes,
> Sending a Hell-ward rode that family,
> And whoso wrought its doom by wicked wrath..
> Nay, and the soul of honoured ancestors
> Fall from their place of peace, being bereft
> Of funeral cakes and the wan death water." Page 5.

Thus we find the discussion resulting from a conflct of duties. Plainly here is a field for ethical study.

As the dialogue proceeds we find a new emphasis being placed on the spiritual nature of God, who is still recorded as the Immanent Being, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. With the Brahman-Atman of the Upanishads, we find the god Vishnu identified as well as Krishna

who is the incarnation of the Brahman-Atman-Vishnu, receiving the title of "Blessed Lord."

Krishna is represented as being much interested in the affairs of men, there being a close personal relationshaip possible for those who are willing to follow his teachings and meet his requirments The relationship is seen in Krishna's method of interesting himself in the affairs of men. According as he is needed, he comes to earth to straighten out men's activities and to remind them of their need for fellowship with the divine. "Many births of men and thee have passed, O Arjuna. I know them all; but thou knowest them not. Though birthless and unchanging of essence, and though of born things, yet in my sway over the nature that is mine own, I come into birth by my own magic. Whenever the law fails and lawlessness uprises, then do I bring myself to bodied birth. To guard the righteous and to destroy evil-doers, to establish the law, I come into birth, age after age." P.36. This doctrine of the Avatar or divine incarnation held that God did not merely manifest himself in human form, but that God actually became man. Moore says, "At the same time he was truly God and truly man." This gave the Hindus a God whom they could understand, as well as a God who could appreciate their problems and infirmities.

Krishna taught that the highest good was realized when the human soul is allowed to dwell in the presence of the Supreme. This was made possible through perfect love and devotion to Krishna. "That worshipper of mine who cherishes no hate against anyone but is full only of friendliness and compassion--who is given to medtation and self-controlled, with heart and mind set on me, and loves me--he is dear to me; he enters into me." Such an one is led without question to deliverance. "Exceeding dear to me is the man of knowledge, and I to him."

"And whoso loveth Me, cometh to Me.
Whoso shall offer me in faith and love------
That offering I accept, lovingly made. p53

"Fleeting and false set your faith fast on Me!
Fix heart and thought on me! Adore Me!
Bring offerings to Me! Make me prostrations!
Make me your supremest joy! and,undivided,
Unto my rest your spirits shall be guided." 54.

" Give Me thy heart! adore Me! serve Me! cling
In faith and love and reverence to Me!
So shalt thou come to Me. "I promise true,
For thou art sweet to me." P.109.

It is essential to note that in the above, "works" are of no avail. Bhakti (love) alone is sufficient to gain eternal fellowship with the Supreme. There are passages that even go further saying that even though a man may be a doer of evil, it will be of no consequence, so long as one worships Krishna. "Even though he should be a doer of exceeding evil that worships Me with undivided worship, he shall be esteemed good; for he is of right purpose. Speedily he becomes righteous of soul, and comes to a lasting peace. O Arjun, be assured that none who is devoted to me is lost. For even they that be born of sin,O son of Prithi, women, traffickers, and serfs--if they turn to Me, come to the supreme path." p53

Thus God was not only the Supreme Ruler, he was the Savior of men. Krishna was looked upon as the personal Savior, possessing all power to forgive sins and to save all who appealed to him in faith. "Fly to Me alone. Make Me thy single refuge! I will free thy soul from all its sins! Be of good cheer."

Neither did he make any distinctions as to whom he saved. All the four castes, even women, were welcomed. All that was necessary was for them to appeal to him for mercy and forgiveness and he assured them that he would grant their every request. "Surrendering all the laws, come for refuge to Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sins. Grieve not." p.57 Nor did he stop there. He wished to make it as easy as possible, and accordingly welcomed all forms of worship,

"If any worshipper, whatsoever, seeks with reverence and faith to worship anybody whatsoever, that same faith in him I make manifest. For I am the Receiver and the Lord of every sacrifice."

Thus salvation was by Bhakti or devotion to Krishna. This conception of the Deity as a personal being, kind and loving toward those who worship him, has done much to enrich the lives of countless millions throughout the centuries in India.

Krishna's idea of "grace" solved one of the most perplexing of problems. Men could not reconcile the working of Karma--and the Indian mind has never been able to get away from it-- with a god who, while supreme, was also free. If God interfered in the affairs of men to free them from their karma, then he would be bound and not free. A God to be free could not allow himself to be contaminated with the affairs of this earth. And yet how could he be supreme and not be able to help them in their hour of need? How eagerly they must have received this new ethical conception that was given to them in the Gita when it was held that"Work done with no idea of reward, brings no entanglements." Unless there was a selfish purpose back of work, then there was no entanglements, the soul was not fettered. "Find full reward of doing right in right! Let right deeds be thy motive, not the fruit that comes from them. Live in action! Labour! Make thine acts thy piety , casting all self aside, condemning gain and merit." p.13. "Those make thou not to stumble,Oh Prince, having the light; but all thy dues discharging, for My sake, with meditation centered inwardly, seeking no profit, satisfied, serene, heedless of issue, fight.".p.20. "Such three fold faith, in highest piety kept, with no hope of gain, by hearts devout, is perfect work of Sattwan, true belief. Religion shown in act of proud display to win good entertainment, worship, fame,such say I,is of Rajas, rash,vain."9

As God could not be thought of as selfish, the activity which he practised on men's behalf, through the instrumentality of Krishna, in no way interferred with his freedom. It was in this connection that the Gita made one of its finest contributions.

Not only did it assist them in solving one of their most vexing problems, but it had a very profound effect upon their attitude toward their individual tasks. It made it perfectly clear that each man was supposed to execute his allotted work, whatever it might be, as indicated by his caste. The every-day work of the world should be accomplished with no thought of reward. This gave to honest labor a dignity and position, a moral content, that we have not discovered in previous writings. "The work of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, O thou slayer of thy foes, is fixed by reason of the qualities planted in each. A Brahman's virtues, Prince, born of his nature, are serenity, self-mastery, religion, purity, patience, uprightness, learning and to know the truth of things which be. A Kshatrya's pride, born of his nature, lives in valour, fire, constancy, skilfulness, spirit in fight, and open-handedness and noble mien, as of a lord of men. A Vaisya's task, born with his nature, is to til the ground, tend cattle, venture trade. A Sudra's state, suiting his nature, is to minister. Whoso performeth diligent, content, the work allotted to him, whate'er it be, lays hold of perfectness."p.106-7 "Finally, this is better, that one do his own task as he may, even though he fail, than take tasks not his own, though he may think them good. To die performing duty is no ill; but who seeks other roads shall wander still."

It is evident that for the two upper castes, the duties seem much more ethical than do those of the two lower ones, the latter being concerned largely with menial tasks. The essential point for us to

notice is however that, even in the performance of the menial task, one is doing his religious duty. This may be termed one of the central ethical teachings of the Gita. Incidentally, it makes men, even today, all too willing to accept without murmur whatever lot may fall to them.

There are passages where the moral man is spoken of as possessing certain virtues, as for instance; "Fearlessness, purity of the Goodness-Mood, abiding in knowledge and the Rule, almsgiving, restraint of sense, sacrifice, scripture reading, mortification, uprighteousness, harmlessness, truth, wrathlessness, renunciation, restraint of spirit, lack of malice, pity towards born beings, unwantoning sense, tenderness, modesty, steadfastness, heroic temper, patience, constancy, purity, innocence, and lack of overweening spirit are in him that is born of God's estate, O thou Arjuna." Farquhar draws attention to the fact that most of these virtues are "passive". Again we find certain evils condemned: "Yea! shaking off the yoke of flesh, lives lord, not servant, of his lusts: set free from pride, from passion, from the sin of 'self', toucheth tranquility! O Arjuna."

Thus the Gita gives us a fairly accurate conception of a personal, supreme God. Krishna uttered lofty sentiments that should have borne noble fruit. It was by far the most ethical of any of the systems that had evolved during the long centuries of the Hindu search after God. What actually happened was that here and there real saints emerged, finding in the new philosophy a way of life eternal. But the great majority of those who gave allegiance to the system were never able to achieve a life of purity, unselfishness and love. Unfortunately Krishna's reputation, as regarded his personal life, lent itself to the grossest of immoralities. He had been brought up among the cowherds and in the families of the peasants. In the Purana Gita, which goes into great detail regarding his youth, we learn that

Krishna's father had to flee from his king and taking Krishna with him, was directed by the gods to the wife of a herdsman who had recently had a child. Krishna was placed in the care of this family where he grew to manhood. The exploits of Krishna as he roamed in the fields and woods with the sons and daughters of the cowherds does not make very inspiring reading. He was the leader in the obscene frolics that were indulged in by the daughters and also by the wives of the herders. Of this group, eight were his favourites, Radha, being the most favoured of all. He is said to have had one hundred and eight thousand sons from countless wives.

These traditions have easily lent themselves to a sanction of some of the grossest abuses ever perpetrated under the name of religion. For instance the large cult known as Saktism. This cult of Goddess-worship is based on a set of works known as Tantras, which have not been translated into English. They are said to be written in the form of a dialogue between Siva and his wife, treating of the creation of the world, the worship of the gods, the attainment of superhuman power, and the four modes of union with the Supreme Being. It is in connection with the latter teaching that the most monstrous practices are observed.

Throughout it is a worship of the female manifestations in nature. Krishna's exploits with Radha give the followers of the cult a chance to claim with pride in their debasing practices, that they are but following in the foot-steps of their god Krishna. It is claimed by them that their creed is the best ever developed, for by fixing the mind on complete union with the Supreme Being, while indulging in gross practices, they are able to attain the most pious and religious of achievments.

The initiation into this perverted order is carried out in strictest secrecy. Happily the rise in the standard of morals in

the country is gradually forcing the elimination of the grosser side of the ceremony. However, even today, on particular occasions, the entire ceremony is unquestionably performed. At such a time the men and women are seated on the ground in a circle, with no attention paid to the distinctions of caste. The men consider themselves to be forms of the god Siva, while the women take the part of the respective wife. This is according to the doctrine in one of the Tantras, where Siva addressing his wife says,"All men have my form and all women thy form; anyone who recognises any distinction of caste in the mystic circle has a foolish soul." Quoted from Williams,"Brahmanism and Hinduism",page 192. The ceremonies which follow have five features. Quoting again from Williams, page 193. "It consists of five separate actions: 1. The drinking of wine and liquors of various kinds. 2.The eating of meat. 3.The eating of fish. 4. The eating of parched or fried grain. 5Sexual union.

It is not necessary to develope this idea further. Attention has been drawn to a popular phase of Hinduism, which drawing its sanction from the life of Krishna, is most degrading in its influence. It adequately demonstrates the fact that the nature of the Supreme, as it is conceived by his worshippers, has most important consequences on their lives and character.

In addition to cults of this nature, which have surprisingly large followings, superstition, extreme idolatry and injustice too often have characterized this religion, based on the life and sayings of Krishna.

After having made these adverse criticisms, it would be unfair to leave the Bhagavad Gita without paying our respects to the constructive influence which it is exerting on the religious and ethical lives of many thousands of Hindus in India today. The conception of God, as a personal, supreme Being, interested in his followers, together with

the idea of Bahkti, or supreme devotion, has enriched and purified the lives of many who choose to follow those particular doctrines which teach a more exalted and worthy ethical religion.

It has been the genius of Hinduism that, through the centuries, it has been able to absorb into, and make a part of, itself any new religious doctrine or theory which came in contact with it. A notable example is Buddhism. It sprang from Hinduism as a protest against the ritualism and formalism of the Brahman priesthood and, largely as a result of the activities of the Emperor Asoka, it became the accepted religion of a large part of the land. However, within a few centuries, we see it gradually being reabsorbed into the fold of Hinduism, till today Buddhism is practically non-existent in India.

Later on two universal religions, Christianity and Mohammedanism made their impact on Hinduism and today we are seeing many of their features making a profound impression upon the leaders of the Hindu community. Then too the general culture of the West is making its influence felt. Democracy, philanthropy, charity, deeply impress earnest minds as being superior to the orthodox Hindu system. Science and inventions are also causing a change. One still sees the traditional "Holy man" going on his long pilgrimage, but often, instead of going on foot, he travels by train and in visiting certain sacred centers, such as the Amarnath Cave in Kashmir, he goes part of the way by motor. It is not unusual to see the Hindu temple lit by electricity.

Powerful as are these new contacts, I believe the most potent influence to be the lives of Christian men and women. They are effectively demonstrating that the service of God finds at least partial expression in service to humanity. The contrast between the ascetic who withdraws from the world and he who is willing to serve, possibly at great risk to his own life, even the lowest, has a

challenge in it which no honest seeker after Truth can avoid.

These various influences have led the Hindus to attempt to formulate a more consistent philosophy of life, to bring Hindu though and conduct in line with the ideals that are inspiring the best in the life of the modern world. Accordingly we see reforms springing up within Hinduism, some of which have developed into strong, well organized movements.

One of the most influential of these new movements is the Brahma Samaj, founded by Ram Mohan Ray in 1828. It, in the words of Farquhar, is "A theistic society, opposed to polytheism, mythology and idolatry." Its founder can be considered as the pioneer in the advance of the social, educational and religious life of the Hindu community.

The theistic conception held by this Samaj is seen in the following lines, contained in one of their manuals now in use. "Worship is the communion of the soul with God; on the part of man it is the opening of his soul, the outpouring of his aspirations, the acknowledgement of his failures and transgressions and the consecration of his life and work to God as his Lord, Refuge, and Guide; and on the part of God, the communication of His light, strength, inspiration and blessing unto the longing soul." The Religion of the Brahma Samaj, P.40.

Naturally a reform movement of this nature meets with many kinds of opposition. In spite of this however the Samaj has gone forward, sending out missionaries, preaching social reform, taking a definite stand against the evils of caste, the idea of transmigrat etc. Schools for boys and girls have been established and an attempt has been made to educate women in home duties.

It is evident that from the beginning, the Brahma Samaj has been very largely influenced by Christianity. The founder often

said that he owed a great debt to the Christian Scriptures and that in them"He found the life of Christ exerting a greater moral influence than any other of whom he knew." He held that the ancient Vedanta gave India a sufficient theology but that from the angle of ethics, Christ was supreme.

Farquhar holds that the Brahma Samaj have taken over three aspects of Christian teaching: 1st,A large part of the christian attitude toward Christ. 2nd,The sense of sin and what it leads to. 3rd, The attitude toward social life, from which sprang their fairly complete program of social reform. Keshab, the successor to Ram Mohan Ray as head of the Samaj, said in his lecture entitled "Jesus Christ; Europe and Asia", "What moral sweetness and serenity pervades his life! What extraordinary tenderness and meekness--what lamb-like simplicity! His heart was full of mercy and forgiving kindness: friends and foes shared his loving kindness, charity and love. And yet on the other hand, how resolute, firm, and unyielding in his adherence to truth." "Christ tells us to forgive our enemies, yea, to bless them that curse us and pray for them that despitefully use us; he tells us that when one smites the right cheek to turn the other also. Who can adequately conceive this transcendent charity?" "Christ has been my study for a quarter of a century. That God-Man--they say half God and half man--walks daily all over this vast peninsula, enlightening and sanctifying its teeming millions. He is a mighty reality in India' history. He is to us a living and moving spirit. We see him and commune with him. He permeates society as a vital force, and imbues our daily life, and is mixed with our thoughts, speculations and pursuits." "Therefore I say this wonderful man had no thought whatever of self, and lived in God. This unique character of complete self-surrende is the most striking miracle in the world's history which I have seen and which it is possible for the mind of man to conceive."

This does not mean that the movement is looked upon as definitely Christian. Rather it is held by the followers of the Brahma Samaj that all religions are true and that Christ is the fulfiler of India's search. "He comes to fulfil and perfect that religion of communion for which India has been panting, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks. Yes, after long centuries shall this communion be perfected through Christ." Kashab's lectures, "Who is Christ" P.258.

There are several other important reform societies in various parts of India, notably the Prathana Samaj in Western India and the Arya Smaja in Northern India. All of them are attempting to usher in religious and social reforms such as, for instance, the elimination of the idea of untouchability, the Arya's being particularly active in this connection in the Punjab, the remarriage of widows, the education of women, the purifying of the forms of religious observance, such as the abandonment of idols and the elimination of temple prostitutes.

Thus there is at work throughout India a movement which, from within, is attempting to put an entirely new content into the old structure of Hinduism. Considerable progress has already been made. Just how the acknowledged leadership of Christ is to develop, it is impossible to anticipate. Certain it is that the introduction of Christianity to India and the influence of the culture of the West, have resulted in a new leaven which is working throughout Hinduism. Across the length and breadth of the land there are many thoudands of men and women, who, while calling themselves Hindus, are devout followers, some openly, others secretly, of the lowly Nazarene.

As we look back over the centuries of struggle in India, we cannot but be impressed with the earnestness of the search and the craving which at all times has surged through the people in their desire to achive an appreciation of the Divine. We have seen that

the ethical note varied with the changing circumstances that developed through the years. At times their religion reached heights of beauty that were then, and are now, inspiring. The tragedy was that, invariable when they attained a new height of moral vision, they lost the way and were soon back in the old round of bewilderment, lost in the maze, mystery and confusion of their own philosophy.

There are three main indictments that can be brought against the teachings of Hinduism: First, its conception of God. God, throughout Hinduism, has been largely devoid of moral attributes. We saw in the Rig Veda, particularly in the hymns to Varuna, that a beginning toward an ethical conception was made. But in the great majority of the hymns, moral features were less prominent than the physical, the ethical qualities finding but little place. Hymn after hymn can be read without finding a single moral idea. In the later Vedas we saw how the sacrifice had usurped almost entirely the place which the gods had held in the Rig. In the Upanishads, Brahman was considered as the one, passionless, unsearchable, ineffable Being, devoid of qualities, and altogether too vague and mystical to be of much inspiration in the lives of the majority of those who sought for union with him. In the Gita, a nobler note was struck but as we have seen, the general result has not been inspiring.

Second, the conception of evil. It has been held that evil results from a lack of knowledge, that the intellect is the seat of unrighteousness. The will has nothing to do with the attainment of a religious life. Ignorance, not moral imperfections, separates the soul from its ideal.

Third, the conception of personality. We have seen how Hindu

ethical thought and practice have developed on a different set of presuppositions than have those of the West. Throughtout the whole history of Hindu thought, existence has been looked upon as a bondage and as such is something to be transcended. Existence is a misery. Release is doubtful. This desire to be free from the world and all existence, leaves no place for the idea of the sacredness of the individual.

We have already seen how the development of the caste system fostered this complete disregard for the sacredness of human personality. Likewise in suttee, the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their departed husbands, we see a like disregard for the value or respect of the individual. It is significant to note that this practice was stopped, not because of any general revolt against it within Hinduism, but because of the activity of the British Government which has prohibited it by law.

Thus caste, suttee, child marriage, the treatment of widows, the deification of every kind of vice, extreme idolatry, superstition and the general lack of moral ideals prove that within orthodox Hinduism, there is little reverence for, or belief in, the sacredness of personality. President H. C. King has said, as quoted by Jones, in India's Problem, Krishna or Christ, "The principle of reverence for personality is the ruling principle in ethics and religion; it constitutes therefore the truest and highest test of either an individual or a civilization." Anyone at all familiar with Hinduism of the past and, with the exception of minor segments, of the Hinduism of the present, will have to conclude that, at least from this point of view, Hinduism is woefully lacking in ethical culture. The idea of brotherhood, even within one's own caste, is a term devoid of meaning.

On the other hand, India has much to teach us. Such passive virtues as meekness, forebearance, long suffering, non-resistance, calmness, unselfishness, are often seen at their best in India. The ascetic idea, while containing much that we rightly denounce, does have an abiding truth in the emphasis which it places on the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal. The discipline which it calls for, the renouncing of all material comforts for the sake of an ideal, cannot but fill us with admiration.

Their three greatest conception were Karma, Bakhti, and Redemption. In none of them have they found satisfaction. Today Christ is pointing out a more excellent way; in Him many are finding the solution. Karma is transcended, for He has offered not only to share, but to remove all burdens; in Him is found the highest inspiration for Bakhti, or worthy devotion; through Him men are redeemed.

When the Hindu mind once sees clearly that in Jesus they actually have Him for whom, through the ages, they have been searching, when by the sheer beauty and force of His personality they see in Him the "Crown of Hinduism", it is safe to predict that their devotion and keen spiritual understanding will reveal to them an even greater Master than we of the West have yet known.

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